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The Ingredients for a Happy Marriage

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him; ask Him for assistance and for His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Him from the evil of ourselves and from repercussions of our actions. Whosoever Allah guides there is no one to misguide him. Whosoever Allah misguides there is no one to guide him. I testify that there is no deity except Allah, He is One without any partner. And I testify that Muhammed is His servant and messenger. O Allah! Send Your blessings and salutations on the Prophet, his family, his companions and on those who follow his footsteps until the Day of Judgement.

Our subject concerns a very important aspect of social life. This is why I would like to present a gift to all those who are getting married - and in fact, to everyone in general. A gift, as you all know, is an expression of true love and gifts also breed happiness in the hearts of both spouses. Although, in everyday life, people are used to receiving material gifts, I will offer you a meta-physical gift (choosing the permanent over the perishing).

I would like to tackle the issue of marriage which is an issue that many young men and women are concerned about. I pray that Allah makes this endeavour a means to bring about happiness for them in both worlds. Allah assumes responsibility for that and He is also quite Capable of making that a reality.

There are certain factors that have prompted me to speak on this issue. I will mention those issues first.

1. **The importance of this issue**. A happy and successful marriage is a necessary goal for anyone who is either already married or is thinking about it.

2. **Frequent marital arguments and fights that lead to separation and then divorce.** This is not exclusive to our communities alone. It is a phenomenon that prevails - with staggering statistics - throughout the world. *For instance, the divorce rate in the USA is 48%; in Germany 35%; in some parts of Europe and in some states in USA it has reached 62% and in some Arab states it has reached 20%.* Then, there are so many families that live with the turmoils of conflicts and arguments.

3. **A stable and secure family will produce generations of Muslims who can carry the message of Islam.** We desperately need pious young men and believing women who are raised in an environment of happiness, not in one of disruption and disunity. Children can then grow up in a healthy and pleasant climate and instead of having to cope with family tensions. These households will produce Da'ees (invitors to Islam) and reformers.

   I have consulted experts in this field (of marriage) and I have also referred to some books. I have then endeavoured to write a book entitled: **"Ingredients for a happy marriage"**. I will enumerate these ingredients briefly and emphatically. But before I begin, I would like to draw your attention to the importance which Islam gives to marriage through verses of the Qur'an and relevant Hadith.

Relevant Verses from the Qur'an

"O mankind! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single soul and then created from that soul its mate. He then disseminated from them many men and women."[1]

"And of His signs is (the sign) that He has created from among yourselves your spouses - that you may find tranquillity with them - and put love and kindness between you."[2]

"And We have created pairs from everything so that you may take heed."[3]

Among the qualities of believers, Allah also lists the following:

"And those who say: 'O our Lord! Grant us from our spouses and offspring the apple of our eyes and make us leaders of the pious."[4]

They seek good fortune in their spouses and children from Allah Who is The Capable.

Relevant Hadith

The Prophet (SAW) said: *"O young men! Whoever among you is able to wed he should do so..."*[5]

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[1] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 1.

[2] Surah Ar-Rum (30), ayat 21.

[3] Surah Az-Zariyat (51), ayat 49.

[4] Surah Al-Furqan (25), ayat 74.

[5] Bukhari and Muslim

Anas (RA) says that a group of people asked the wives of the Prophet (SAW) what he did at home (if there were any special acts he performed). After they had enquired they felt that because the Prophet (SAW) was forgiven for his sins, he could afford not be extraordinary with regards to his actions. One of them said that he would no longer wed; another resolved not to eat meat and another was determined not to sleep on a bed. When the Prophet (SAW) heard about this he immediately said: *'What is wrong with people who resolve not to do such and such. I pray and I sleep. I fast and I eat. I get married to women. Whoever dislikes my way is not of me.'*[6]

Dear friends! Building the family is essential for the establishment of this Deen (Islam). The family is the cornerstone of the social structure. A successful and purposeful marriage is the indispensable foundation of this cornerstone. A purposeless and weak foundation will not bear any fruit in any marriage. For example, those who take on temporary marriage (mut'ah) merely to fulfil their desire without even thinking about the honourable ideals in the institution of marriage, become very bored with their 'marital' life because they fail to identify the goals from the very outset.

When Islam came with guidance for mankind, it came with a complete and comprehensive legal system:

"Today, I have perfected for you your religion."[7]

In Islam, there is a solution for any legal problem. Abu Dharr (RA) says: *"The Prophet (SAW) left us with such knowledge that even if a bird changed course in the sky we have already been given signs for it."*[8]

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[6] Ibid

[7] Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), ayat 3.

[8] Ahmed

Married life, like other issues, has been given its due share of legislation and Islam has tackled all its aspects such that it makes for a happy and prosperous life.

I used to ask myself why Allah's enemy attacks the concept of the Muslim family and why they constantly try to catch us in their nets of disunity and chaos. I have now realised that they have understood that the collapse of the Muslim family is just as good as destroying the whole of Muslim society. When havoc runs loose in the family there is no hope that it will breed a good and useful nation. I once visited a juvenile detention centre and, to my astonishment, I found out that between 70% and 80% of these young children were admitted because of husband and wife problems or divorce. It is quite obvious that the more a household is prone to problems, the more likely it is that the children will be sent to these 'homes.'

So do you see, O Brothers, what such disunity and argument create? It is this phenomenon that the enemy has capitalised upon and they try their utmost to destroy the very foundation of society. May Allah protect us all from their schemes and plots. Ameen.

Ingredients for a happy marriage

I would now like to draw your attention to those factors which make a marriage work effectively. I will try to use real examples so that it becomes more comprehensible.

In brief, a happy marriage should have the following ingredients:

1. Elements that should be considered before marriage;
2. Fulfilling marital responsibilities;
3. A realistic approach to married life;
4. An understanding of the spouse's psychological frame of mind;
5. Children;
6. Good relationships with other people;
7. The ability to solve problems and
8. Miscellaneous issues.

I will shed some light on all of these issues and, as much as possible, I will try to be brief, unless it is necessary to elaborate.

1. Elements that should be considered before marriage.

A Good choice:

Abu Huraira (RA) narrates that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"A woman is married for one of four reasons: for her beauty, her wealth, her genealogy or her faith. So be successful with a woman of faith. May Allah bless you."[9]

No one disagrees that the right choice has to be made. The issue is what constitutes a good choice.

Many people give importance to beauty, wealth and genealogy. This is fine except when they are given priority over faith. Faith is the most important criterion in the choice of a spouse. And just as men are advised to make a good choice for a bride, the parents or guardians of the girl should also consider the right choice for their daughter. It is disappointing that people ask many questions about how much a man earns and what kind of house he will provide for his wife but do not care to ask about the state of his faith. The principle in marriage is faith. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"When a man whose character and faith you like approaches you (for marriage), then marry him. If you do not then there will be great trials and widespread disruption on earth."*[10]

When looking for a good choice, the family of the spouse- to-be should also be considered. Sometimes, the family of the spouse may influence their children so much that they can break up the marriage.

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[9] Bukhari and Muslim

[10] Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah

Looking at the prospective spouse

People have taken two extremes in this issue. Some parents detest the very idea that the bridegroom see their daughter before marriage. Whereas the Prophet (SAW) encouraged the idea and in fact ordered Mughairah (RA) to do so: *'Look at her because that will be more conducive to a longer marriage.'*[11]

Abu Huraira (RA) says that once he stayed with the Prophet when a man from the Ansar came and informed that he was about to marry a woman from the Ansaar. The Prophet (SAW) told him to go and look at her.[12]

To sum up, the Prophet (SAW) encouraged people to look at their future spouse because that would breed love and produce a better relationship. Not allowing someone to see one's daughter is a violation of this practice and tradition.

On the other hand, there are others who have blown this practise out of proportion. Not only does the prospective husband look at the bride-to-be, but he also mixes and mingles with her as if he were "dating" her. This is in complete violation of Islamic values and traditions. Islam only allows the man to look at her face and hands and part of her hair. All this is in the company of a *Mahram* (someone whom the girl cannot marry).

Consideration in Mahr and marriage parties

Aisha (RA) says that the Prophet (SAW) gave his wives 12 *awqiya*[13] as *Mahr* (marriage gift given by the husband).[14]

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[11] Ahmed, Tirmidhi and Hakim
[12] Muslim
[13] An awqiya is equivalent to 40 silver Dirham (128 grams of silver).
[14] Muslim

Umar (RA) narrates the same hadith about the wives and the Prophet's daughters.[15] The Prophet (SAW) also said: *"The best Mahr is the one that is the easiest (to give)."*[16]

An expert on this subject writes:

"Adopting the middle road and avoiding extreme measures, vanity and show bring about a successful marriage. The rich and famous should take the lead in these issues because they are the ones who start trends whereas others follow."

Extravagant mahr and marriage parties require great resolve and expenses.

Again, people adopt two extremes in this issue. Some people are stingy to the point that they merely give their wives a few coins. Then there are those who spend so much on the first night that they could afford to get many others married for the same amount of money. Both extremes are condemned.

Someone might ask: What does extravagant spending and stingy mahr have to do with a successful marriage?

The answer is that when a person takes on the responsibility to earn money beyond his capacity and starts to spend extravagantly, he will soon run dry on emotions and then begin to blame his wife for every little thing that goes wrong in the marriage. He starts to say things like: 'I earn for you and all you do is spend and you are the reason for all my problems.' Then, when all this is accompanied by the demands of "loan sharks" and others, matters get from bad to worse. Eventually, he can no longer cope and resorts to divorce. And even if he does not, the marriage is a total nightmare.

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[15] Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi and Hakim

[16] Abu Dawood, Baihiqi and Hakim

However, if a certain amount of foresight is used and the ceremonies of marriage are offered according to the practice of the Prophet (SAW) it is most likely that the expectations of all concerned will be more in line with reality.

2. *Fulfilling marital responsibilities*

This issue has many points of discussion. I will try and run through them in brief. The issue is really summed up by two verses of the Qur'an:

"And treat them with kindness,"[17]

"They have as many rights as duties with kindness."[18]

There are three types of rights involved. The first is the right of the husband over the wife. The basis of this is found in the verses:

"Men are supervisors over women because Allah has made some of them superior over others; and also because of what they spend from their wealth."[19]

"Men are a degree higher than them (women)."[20]

The Rights of the Husband over his Wife

The rights of the husband may be summed up as follows:

a. Being a supervisor. This is a right that many men have waived by their own choice and deem such conduct as being good for the wife. This is wrong. This is because women, by their very nature, wish to lean on someone's shoulders. And even though many women love to boast in front of their peers about how obedient their husbands are, they still fill

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[17] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 19.
[18] Surah al-Baqarah (2), ayat 228.
[19] Surah an-Nisa'(4), ayat 34.
[20] Surah al-Baqarah (2), ayat 228.

that vacuum of not having a strong foundation in their own house.

In contrast, the woman who complains that her husband is too domineering will always know, deep in her heart, that she has the comfort of a strong husband to fall back upon. Perhaps I should elucidate this with an example.

When a certain town or country loses control over its security, the towns-people can do whatever they like. There is no psychological reassurance and therefore the fear of violence always lingers in the air. In contrast, when a certain town or country is controlled by strict security measures and leadership, even those who detest the government will feel safe and secure.

So when men relegate themselves from the position of supervision, they are not actually doing women any favours. In fact, they are doing them a great disservice. The Prophet (SAW) spoke the truth when he said:

"No nation can prosper when they relinquish their authority to a woman."[21] This hadith applies in general, even in the house. I believe that when a woman asks her husband to be firm and fulfil his role as a supervisor - just as she demands him to spend on her - her request will be a source of stability to the family.

[21] Bukhari

The aunt of Hussain ibn Muhsin (RA) came to the Prophet (SAW) who asked her if she was married and if so, how she was with her husband. She said she made every effort to serve him and keep him happy as much as possible. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Be careful how you are with him. He can either be your Paradise or (means of) your Hell."*[23]

c. Not to allow anyone in the house without his permission.

This is borne out by the narration of Abu Huraira (RA) who says: *"No woman should fast while her husband is present except with his leave. No woman should allow anyone in his house while he is present except with his leave..."*[24]

Nawwawi (RA) says: "this is when she does not know of the husband's pleasure in allowing the person inside. When she knows that her husband would not mind at all, then this rule does not apply."[25] This is the usual practice. To sum up, an understanding of the husband's desire and permission (either explicitly or implicitly) should be considered.[26]

d. Serving the husband.

The correct opinion in this disputed matter is that it is compulsory for the wife to serve the needs of her husband. Obviously, this will differ from husband to husband, but nevertheless, it still remains one of her duties. The aforementioned hadith of the aunt of Hussain (RA) is testimony to that. We find that many wives - merely for the

[23] Ahmed, Ibn Sa'd and Hakim
[24] Bukhari and Muslim
[25] Nawwawi's Commentary of Muslim: 7/115
[26] Fathul Bari: 9/296

The correct opinion in this disputed matter is that it is compulsory for the wife to serve the needs of her husband. Obviously, this will differ from husband to husband, but nevertheless, it still remains one of her duties. The aforementioned hadith of the aunt of Hussain (RA) is testimony to that. We find that many wives - merely for the sake of boasting and following others blindly - demand their husbands to provide servants for them in chores which they can carry out themselves. This is one practice that ruffles marriages because it puts an extra financial burden on the husband.

You might perhaps be taken aback by the story of someone who broadcast his lifestyle on the radio. His salary was 7,000 riyals and he lived in a rented apartment with two servants. He justified this expense by saying that it was the wife who wanted this kind of standard.

Also, what can be said to the wife applies equally well to the husband. He should consider her well-being and happiness when asking her to do chores.

e. Not to assume voluntary fasting without his permission.

The hadith for this has already been cited. This is because the husband will not be able to enjoy her if he so desires during her fast. This applies only to voluntary fasting and not to compulsory fasting.

f. She should safeguard herself, his wealth and his children.

The wife is the caretaker of the husband's house while he is absent. The most precious belongings of any human being are honour, wealth and children. These items are a trust in the hands of the wife and she will be questioned about these. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"The wife is a caretaker in the house of her husband and she will be questioned about it."*[27]

This is sufficient information about the rights of a husband.

The Rights of a Wife over her Husband

There are several issues here:

a. Mahr, or a gift from the husband.

The wife has the right to demand this from the husband because Allah says:

"And give women their mahr as gifts."[28]

The previous discussion on mahr should be re-emphasised here.

b. Expenses and residence. This is borne out by the verses:

"And it is a duty for the father of the child to provide her (the mother) with food and clothing in kindness."[29]

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[27] Bukhari and Muslim

[28] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 4.

[29] Surah al-Baqarah (2), ayat 233.

"Lodge them where you dwell, according to your means."[30]

Hakim ibn Mu'awiyah narrates from his father that he (his father) asked the Prophet (SAW) what rights the wife had over the husband. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"To feed her when you eat; to clothe her when you wear clothes; not to hit her in the face, nor to be profane and not to separate from her except in the house."*[31]

Both Bukhari and Muslim narrate that the Prophet (SAW) said to Hind, the daughter of 'Utbah, when she came to complain about the stinginess of her husband Abu Sufyan (RA): *"Take what is reasonable for yourself and for your child."*

c. Living with kindness and a good moral character.

This is also something the wife can demand from her husband. Allah says:

"And deal with them in kindness."[32]

The Prophet (SAW) said: *'The best among you is the one who is the best with his family. I am the best among you with my family.'*[33]

It is because of these mandates that we urge husbands to follow the noble Islamic method in their treatment of their wives. Even in the event of divorce Allah instructs us to be kind and not to follow sadistic temptations:

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[30] Surah at-Talaq (65), ayat 6.
[31] Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah and Hakim
[32] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 19.
[33] Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban and Hakim

"Divorce is pronounce twice. Thereafter, the wife should either be kept in honour, or allowed to leave in kindness."[34]

It should be remembered that people may choose to be too patient and lenient or too harsh and stringent. The middle path is the one to adopt.

d. The right to sleep and live in peace.

This may sound obvious, but there are those who either overlook this point, or ignore it. There are many men who come home late at night after having a "fun time" with their friends, and expect their wives to fulfil their desires immediately. They believe, or at least their actions suggest they believe, that the wife is merely a servant who cooks, cleans, looks after the children and then presents herself for their enjoyment when they so desire. Men have been prevented from engaging in voluntary forms of worship to ensure that they do not ignore the psychological and emotional needs of the wife. Worship is a virtue. Having a "fun time" with one's friends may become a sinful act.

Salmaan (RA) went to visit Abu Darda (RA) (they were both made brothers when the latter came to Madinah), but he had not yet reached home. Umm Darda (RA) complained to Salmaan (RA) that her husband had no need for her anymore. He fasted during the day and prayed at night. Abu Darda (RA) came and offered food. Salmaan (RA) implored his host to break his fast (since it was a voluntary one) and made him eat with him. He stayed the night with them and prevented Abu Darda (RA) from praying and said: "Your body has a right over you; your Lord has a right over

[34] Surah al-Baqarah (2), ayat 229.

you and your family has a right over you. So fast and do not fast. Pray and spend some time with your family and give everybody their due right." When morning came they made ablution and went to the mosque where they narrated the saga to the Prophet (SAW) who said: *"Salmaan spoke the truth."*[35]

e. Education.

Perhaps this is sometimes even more necessary for the husband to do than providing his wife with food and clothing. Especially when she has not had any Islamic orientation. This is in line with the practice of the Prophet (SAW), who not only taught his own wives but also allowed a poor man to give his wife education as her mahr.[36] Many men are quite lazy and indifferent in this matter. May Allah help us.

f. The right to be kept in honour and dignity.

This is one of the most prominent rights of the wife over her husband. The husband should do everything to protect his wife's honour and dignity particularly in front of other people. There are animals in the jungle who are more considerate of their mates' honour and pride than humans. Yes, this does mean that there should be a certain amount of possessiveness. The Prophet (SAW) described the brother-in-law as being death (when alone with the brother's wife), so how can men justify their women mixing and mingling with strangers and others without any supervision. Sa'd

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[35] Bukhari

[36] That was teaching his wife what he knew of the Quran.

(RA) was the most possessive about his wife among the companions. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"Are you amazed at how much Sa'd is possessive? By Allah, I am much more possessive than he is and Allah is much more so than I."*[37]

So this is very necessary for men. The wolf will always devour the lonely sheep.

The Rights of both Husband and Wife over each other

The third type of right is common between the couple. No one is precluded from these. Those are:

a. Not to reveal secrets.

This is a general rule for both parties and both will be held equally responsible to uphold the other's confidentiality. The Prophet (SAW) said: *"The man who will be the most wretched in status, in the Eyes of Allah on the Day of Judgement, will be the husband who confides in his wife and she in him, and then he goes and reveals her secret."*[38]

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[37] Muslim
[38] Ibid

b. Mutual advice.

This plays a very big role in the development of marriage and the household in general. Spouses should advise one another and even take account of and check one another. It is a mistake to think that this role is reserved for the husband and the wife should tolerate the mistakes of the husband. Each should point out, with affection, the mistakes of the other and each should accept their own faults.

c. Mutual consultation.

This applies to the everyday running of the house and family affairs. The husband should not belittle the advice and opinion of his wife, in case her opinion proves to be more practical and correct than his. The best example to follow in this issue is the Prophet (SAW) when he sought the advice of Umm Salamah (RA) at the treaty of Hudaibiyah. The Companions were in no mood for any compromise with the Quraish, but the Prophet (SAW) had, through divine inspiration, signed a peace treaty with the Quraish. The Prophet (SAW) had the difficult task of consoling his Companions and asking them to shave their heads and release their Ihram (Hajj garments). Umm Salamah (RA) advised him to shave his head first, then the Companions would automatically follow him. That is what happened.

d. True love between the couple.

Marriage cannot be successful without this. And although this is an issue which does not follow any rationale, each spouse should at least express love towards the other. The

Prophet (SAW) used to offer words of love and affection towards his wives. We should follow him and not be shy or reluctant about the matter. Allah describes the houris of Paradise as being extremely compassionate (*'urub*) towards their spouses[39]. A marriage which is devoid of good and warm words is one that is bereft of any happiness.

[39] c.f. Surah al-Waqi'ah (56), ayat 37.

3. A realistic approach to married life.

This issue can be discussed under the following headings:

a. A realistic attitude towards the mahr, reception and gifts.

There is no benefit in burdening the husband with extravagant mahr and imposing upon him to give a lavish wedding reception. In fact, it could very well be the downfall of many marriages. All expenses should be met according to the husband's financial capability. The wife (and other members of the family) should not expect the husband to spend in excess merely because he is marrying her.

b. One of the better ingredients for a happy marriage, on the wife's part, is not to pressure her husband into spending money on things he cannot afford. There should be patience in difficult times and content in prosperous times. The worst thing a woman can do for her marriage is to rebel in money matters and create unnecessary division between them. The Prophet left his wives for a whole month when they demanded better living standards from him. He remained apart from them until Allah revealed:

"O Prophet! Tell your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world and its lustre then come, I will give you some means and then let you leave gracefully. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, then Allah has prepared, for those who are good among you, a great reward."[40]

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[40] Surah al-Ahzaab (33), ayats 28-29.

So the Prophet chose them and they reciprocated.

The husband should also be considerate and be generous in spending. He should avoid being stingy, for that is condemned. Allah says:

"Let the wealthy spend from his wealth. And those for whom Allah has restricted their provisions, they should spend from what ever Allah has given them."[41]

c. Being realistic in expectations and avoiding fantasies.

Very few people live up to this reality. Many couples paint a fantastic picture in their minds before marriage and assume their spouses to be something very similar to the spouses of Paradise. For that, they will have to wait. Moderate expectations from the spouse are commendable and each should try to accommodate the other's ideals as far as possible. The Prophet (SAW) said: "*A believing man should not condemn (a quality of) a believing woman. If he dislikes one characteristic, he may well like another characteristic.*"[42]

This is how Allah has created human beings. No one person is endowed with all the best qualities. A woman may be average in beauty but excellent in faith and personality.

If perfectionists stopped and thought for a moment, they would realise that they are unjust. Many of the perfections they seek do not exist in their own lives and personalities. People would like to see certain qualities in them (the perfectionists), just as they would like to find their match. It may happen that a finicky person finds someone he likes

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[41] Surah at-Talaq (65), ayat 7.
[42] Muslim

after a very long wait, only to be turned down by the woman because she does not like what she sees. So they end up losing out in life totally.

d. A realistic approach in asking for rights and fulfilment of responsibilities.

Although the husband and wife both have rights, it is not proper that they violate each other's rights and demand unrealistic chores from each other. They should be very considerate and lighten each other's burden as much as possible.

4. Understanding the spouse's psychological frame of mind.

This is necessary for the compatibility and longevity of marriage. But despite this, many couples do not bother to give this issue any attention. This involves the likes and dislikes of each other and what pleases and displeases each other. Also, this is something which is not understood by merely asking the spouse, but also by observation and insight.

The best example to illustrate this point is the story of Qadi Shuraih who says: "I married a woman from the tribe of Tamim. On the first night I made ablution and offered prayers. She joined in. When I finished, I asked Allah to make her a means of blessings, to grant me pleasure from her good qualities and to protect me from her bad. Then I praised Allah. She said: 'I am a stranger for you. What ever pleases you I will oblige and what ever displeases you I will avoid.' So I told her what I liked and disliked. She asked: 'Would like my family to visit me?' I told her that since I was a judge, I would bore them. Then she asked me which neighbours I preferred, so I informed her."

"I lived with this woman in happiness and bliss for a whole year. Then, an old woman came to the house who was ordering my wife around. On enquiring, I found out that she was my mother-in-law who immediately asked me: 'How are you with your wife?' I said that she is the best wife I could have. The mother said: 'There is no worse person than the one who is spoiled. If she puts you in any kind of doubt then hit her."

"The mother would then come every year to our house and give advice to her daughter. I lived with my wife for twenty years

and only once was I angry at her. And that too was my mistake."[43]

[43] The whole story is mentioned in Al-'iqdul Farid

5. Children

It is well known that one of the greatest objectives of marriage is the procreation of humans and to continue one's own genealogy. There are several rights and pre-requisites involved in this matter. I will outline them.

a. Bearing a child.

Many husbands ask their wives to use contraceptive devices immediately after marriage because they want to enjoy them first. This is detrimental for the wife because it is medically proven that when a woman who has never given birth uses contraceptive pills, she is at risk of becoming barren for the rest of her life.

Likewise, there are some women who would like to wait for a year or two before they conceive in order to consolidate their relationship with their husbands. This is agreeing to something that is reprehensible.

Then there are those who refuse to get pregnant because it disturbs their academic schedule. This creates a void in their married lives and deprives them of an affectionate relationship with a child who would fill that vacuum.

There are others who refuse to bear a child even after they complete their studies on the pretext of work and a career. At that time, the husband has no recourse except to divorce his wife. As Muslims, we are asked to have children because the Prophet (SAW) will take pride in the number of followers he will have on the Day of Judgement.

b. Raising the children.

People have different ideas and methods about how to raise and educate their children. Every couple has its own ideal and ideology and they will even have differences between themselves. It is clear that there is room for discussion and compromise. At a certain age perhaps, the father should have the last say and at another age the mother should be given the lead role. Each parent should respect the view and decide who is to have the final word. It is important not to condemn and criticise the opinion of each other in front of the children because this will inevitably create long lasting problems in the minds of the children. They will prefer the opinion of one of them, or they may even lose respect for any and all authority. You may hear that a woman has four children who each have their own cars. But the mother still has to use the public transport because none of the children are willing to drive her anywhere.

If there are disputes and differences they should be settled in private and not in front of children.

6. Good relationships with other people.

This applies primarily to the couple's relationship with their respective in-laws and their families. Each spouse should respect the family of the other and not discuss their faults because this instils hatred. There are many husbands who, by revealing the faults and mistakes of their wife's fathers, destroy any hope of living a happy life with their own families. This hope is completely extinguished when the mother-in-law bears the brunt. The same can be said about wives who practise this evil.

I am not saying that each spouse should love the other's families because that is a matter for the heart (which is in Allah's control). I am emphasising that each should respect the honour and sensitivities of the other.

Relationships with the neighbours depend on the type of neighbour one has. Couples should establish and maintain as good a relationship as possible.

7. *The ability to solve problems.*

Every man and woman likes to believe that they are capable of handling and solving their own marital problems. I will discuss this issue under the following headings:

a. Deliberation and wisdom.

Every couple goes through problems in their marriage, some more than others. Even the Prophet (SAW) faced certain obstacles with his wives. It is the wisdom of Allah that they follow the example of the Prophet (SAW) and solve their problems through similar methods.

Anas (RA) says: *"The Prophet (SAW) was with one of his wives when a servant came from one of his other wives with a bowl of food. The wife in whose house the Prophet (SAW) was at that time hit the hand of the servant. The bowl of food slipped out of her hand and broke into pieces. The Prophet (SAW) gathered the food and broken bowl and said: 'Your mother became possessive.'* [44] *He then asked the servant to remain where she was until he came back with another bowl. He placed the food in the bowl and left the broken bowl in the house where it was broken."*[45]

This is how the guide to mankind deliberated and handled a potentially volatile situation before it got completely out of proportion. Each spouse should weigh every situation and extinguish with wisdom before it ruins their crops and offspring. Allah does not like destruction and commotion.

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[44] All the wives of the Prophet (SAW) are known as the "Mothers of the believers."

[45] Bukhari

A wife was very angry at her husband and demanded immediate divorce. The husband told her to bring a pen and some paper so that she could write down whatever she demanded. When she came with the stationery, the husband persuaded her to sleep over it and make her demands in the morning. The wife agreed. In the morning, the wife was much more relaxed and never mentioned anything about divorce. Soon, she realised her husband's tolerance and ability to solve their problems without any harm.

b. Adjustments.

This means that both spouses adapt and adjust themselves to the nature of the other. This is one of the most difficult tasks for either person during the early days of marriage. Both are used to very different circumstances, home environments and standards of living. So if they do not adjust to their different ideas and ideals, then it will obviously become very cumbersome for both of them. When no adjustments are made we often hear that someone divorced his wife on the first night, while another wife asked for divorce after a week and so on.

c. Restraining the tongue.

One of the best ways for a person to avoid fights and disputes is to safeguard the tongue by not expressing every like and dislike indiscriminately. The Prophet (SAW) was so right then he told Mu'adh (RA): *'Has anything made people fall head first into Hell except the scythes of their*

tongues.' [46] So each spouse should be weary of what they say during an argument.

d. Not to take disputes outside the house.

Trying to resolve problems by taking matters to others, especially to the family of the spouse, is giving fuel to fire. This is because others do not know all the aspects and angles of the problem and will become biased arbiters. This will only inflate the whole ordeal and leave the couple bereft and more divided.

Arguments are usually preceded by minor and silly comments made by one spouse. This minor incident is painted with unrealistic colours which leads the listener to presume the worst. So it is in the best interest of both spouses to work matters out and resolve their problems without taking them out of the home. They should not sleep without trying to resolve the problem.

e. Seeking advise from experts and counsellors.

Seeking advice from experienced and trained people is important when a matter cannot be resolved. These counsellors will be much more objective and thus offer solutions that the couple would not otherwise have considered. I have heard of a young man who asked the advice of an experienced person when he failed to resolve his problem at home. He was told that there was really no problem and told to do something by the counsellor. He did so and immediately the issue was resolved. The young man

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[46] Ahmed and Tirmidhi

thanked Allah for controlling his tongue and asking someone for advice. Allah says:

"And if you fear a rift between them, then appoint an arbiter from his family and an arbiter from her family. If they (the couple) wish to resolve the matter, Allah will allow them to reconcile. Allah is All-Knowing and All-Aware."[47]

f. Being content and happy with destiny and fate.

The greatest benefit in believing in Allah's destiny and decision is that a person remains at peace with His Justice and leaves room for His Wisdom. A believer's matter is always good, if he receives good fortune and thanks Allah, then that is good for him. If he is confronted with a misfortune and remains patient, then that is also good for him. Being patient at the time of trials and tribulations is a sign of strong faith. A person can either be grateful and patient, or be ungrateful and impatient.

Every couple should apply this principle to their lives: if they do not have children, or if they have certain problems with them. They should believe that they if they are patient, Allah will grant them a peace of mind (and protect them form psychological diseases like suicidal tendencies) in this world and that He will offer them a great reward in the Hereafter.

It is terribly annoying to hear that certain men (and women) taunt certain wives for bearing only girls. This they do even though they know that the wives have no control over the matter:

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[47] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 35.

"He grants whomever He wishes females and whomever He wishes males. Or, He grants them both male and female. He (also) leaves some barren."[48]

He knows, more than anybody else, why and where to distribute His Favours. Not complying with His decision is a sign of weak faith.

A man by the name of Abu Hamza wanted to divorce his wife and marry someone else because she only bore girls. The wife composed a poem which said:

> "What is wrong with Abu Hamza?
> He does not come to us and lives, instead,
> in the house next door.
> He is angry because we bear only girls.
> By Allah that is not in our hands.
> We are merely like the earth:
> we produce whatever is sown in us."

The husband realised his mistake and kept his wife in kindness.

Sometimes a person is tested with an ugly spouse. Again, this should be considered a test and nasty remarks should be avoided at all costs. No one is responsible for their looks. "Riyadh", an Egyptian magazine reported that a woman killed and cut her husband into pieces because he used to taunt her about her ugliness and threaten to marry someone else.

Likewise, if, Allah forbid, someone is given a deformed child, they should also treat that child with patience. Maybe there is some good in that for them. Besides, when Allah

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[48] Surah ash-Shura (42), ayats 49-50.

likes someone, He does tend to test them. Also, when either spouse is afflicted with some physical disability or sickness, the other should reciprocate with patience and understanding. This would apply when the husband becomes bankrupt or loses his job. Allah will create other avenues.

8. *Miscellaneous issues.*

There remain some other issues which also make up some of the ingredients for a happy marriage. They are:

a. Women working.

This issue creates a lot of problems for many marriages. This issue is, however, quite clear. If the wife has made some condition with the husband (for work), then he will have to honour any agreement that he may have made with her. The Prophet (SAW) said: "*The contract that deserves to be honoured the most is the one you make to legalise (mating with) women.*"[49] He also said: "*Muslims are bound by their conditions (in contracts).*"[50]

If the husband has stipulated that the wife will not work, or if there was no condition at all, then the wife should listen to the husband.

It should be remembered that the wife should not jeopardise her marriage by working, merely to make a point. This is an issue which has to be worked out and agreed upon through discussions and mutual consultation.

b. The wife's wealth and property.

Some men become greedy when they see that the wife has money. They force her to part with it. This is completely unlawful in Islam. The wife has absolute control and authority over her wealth and she may spend it accordingly.

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[49] Bukhari and Muslim
[50] Abu Dawood, Hakim and Baihiqi

The husband still has to provide for her even if she is wealthy.

This kind of unwarranted domination on the part of men leads to erasing any element of love between the pair. The magazine "Riyadh" has reported that a woman was forced to kill her husband, cut him into pieces and scatter them in two towns. This was because he used to hit her and demand money from her. Allah says:

"And give women their mahr as a gift. If they willing give you some portion of it, then receive it with an open heart."[51]

c. Dressing up.

Beauty plays a great role in creating a happy and prosperous marriage. Man, by nature, is lured towards beauty. This applies just as much to the man as to the woman. Many men feel that this is something that women like doing and they do not feel the necessity to dress up and look decent for their wives. This is totally wrong. Allah says:

"And they (the women) have just as much right, in kindness, as they have duties."[52]

While it is true that men should not preen and become vain about minute details of their appearance, this does not mean that they should not make an effort to be more presentable. A man, who was grey, asked a lady's hand in marriage. The lady said: "Tell him that I have grey hair." The man immediately withdrew his bid. The lady then told everybody

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[51] Surah an-Nisa' (4), ayat 4.

[52] Surah al-Baqarah (2), ayat 228.

concerned that she had only black hair and she only wanted to show that women like to see what men like to see in their spouses.

Unfortunately, many women have an appalling attitude towards the whole concept of beauty and dressing up. They will remain in an absolute disgusting state for days on end. Then, when a social occasion arrives, they will dress up and present themselves with great pride and fuss. All this with the clothing and jewellery that their husbands bought for them. It is a tremendous injustice that they can decorate themselves for others but not for their own husbands. The husbands have more rights to their appearances and beauty than all other women combined.

d. The mother-in-law.

I have been informed by many who read gossip magazines that the mother-in-law lives to destroy the marriage of her daughter and her happiness lies in teaching her daughter schemes and tricks whereby she is able to ruin the husband financially and physically.

Reality is quite different from that. The mother-in-law is someone who is well respected and sacrifices her happiness for the good of her daughter. But this does not mean that all mother-in-laws are like this. Some will be quite the opposite and that is within the realms of human possibility. But to assume that she is conniving all the time is an injustice. The same applies to the husband's mother.

e. Committing sins in search for happiness.

This is extremely detrimental and can have grave repercussions. It has overtaken the minds of Muslims in the name of a "honeymoon". In this month, the couple travel and commit so many sins in the hope of finding happiness. Nothing could be further from the Islamic spirit. In this month of "bliss", they engage in so many un-Islamic activities. It is a month of "enjoyment" and thereafter a life of misery and pain. A Muslim's whole life should be filled with happiness.

They look at pornographic films and magazines. They listen to erotic music or the very least is that the husband invites all his friends where he can show off his wife. Sins have no bliss attached to them, they come with trials and disasters. This is Allah's Law and no one can escape His Law.

f. Gifts.

Perhaps the best issue to discuss at the end of this lecture is the issue of offering gifts to one another. Many fail to realise that this has a tremendous impact on marriage. This also applies to giving gifts to each other's parents. Gifts get rid of resentments and dissolve hatred. This is why the Prophet (SAW) said: *"Offer gifts to one another and you will increase love for one another."*

With gifts, there is spreading salaams (greetings) amongst each other and meeting one another with a smile and happy face. The Prophet (saw) said: *"Shall I not inform you of something that will increase love amongst you if you do it. That is spread salaam."*[53] So try out giving gifts and spreading salaam. You will, Allah willing, see the result.

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[53] Muslim.

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These are the most salient ingredients for the making of a happy marriage. Obviously, there has to be an ardent desire and diligent effort. This effort will form a believing family and raise generations from which leaders and pious personalities rise. The Muslim community is in dire need of confronting the evils of the enemy vis-à-vis the Muslim family.

The family which holds firm to their faith and practice and which makes the Qur'an and Sunnah a model for its life is more likely to exist in happiness and prosperity:

"So whoever follows My Guidance shall not roam astray, not become wretched."[54]

As for those who turn away from the right path; assume the characteristics of East and West blindly and raise their children on that standard, then they have only themselves to blame:

"Whoever turns away from My Remembrance shall experience a strained life. Besides, We shall resurrect him on the Day of Judgement while he is blind."[55]

Allah has promised great rewards and bounties for those couples who live according to his dictates:

"Together with their wives they shall recline under shady groves against cushions."[56]

Angels will welcome and pray for them:

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[54] Surah Taha (20), ayat 123.
[55] Surah Taha (20), ayat 124.
[56] Surah Ya Sin (36), ayat 52.

"O Our Lord! Let them enter gardens which You have promised them. (Let them be accompanied by) those among their parents, spouses and offspring who reformed. Only You are Mighty and Wise."[57]

On the other hand, those couples who do not abide by His Commands should beware of being among those whom Allah describes in the verse:

"Gather those who are unjust with their spouses and whatever they worshipped besides Allah. Then lead them to the path of Hell."[58]

Our final word is that All Praise is due to Allah, The Lord of the Worlds. Blessings be upon the messengers. May Allah send Salutations and Blessings on Muhammed, his family and his companions.

Ameen.

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[57] Surah Ghafir (40), ayat 8.

[58] Surah as-Saffat (37), ayats 22-23.

Examples for us from the women of the sahaba and the salaf-as-saliheen

- Abdullah ibnuz-Zubair said: "I have not seen a woman more generous than 'Aishah and Asmaa'. They differed in their generosity: 'Aishah would collect up something then distribute it [among the needy and the poor]; as for Asmaa', she would not keep what she had for the following day [without spending it]." [59]

- 'Urwah said: "Whenever I wanted to go away early in the morning I would visit 'Aisha (RA) in her home and greet her. I went to see her early one morning and found her standing [in prayer] and reciting: **"But Allah has been gracious to us, and has saved us from the Torment of the fire."**[60], repeating it and crying. I stood there [waiting for her to finish], but when I got weary [of waiting] I made my way to the market for a few things then returned to find her still in prayer, standing and crying." [61]

- 'Urwah said: " 'Aisha (RA) would not keep something of what Allah (SWT) provided her without giving it in charity." [62]

- Anas (RA) said: 'Once the Prophet (SAW) entered the mosque and saw a rope hanging between its two pillars. He said, "What is this rope?" The people said, "This rope is for Zainab who, when she feels tired holds it [to keep

[59] Ahkaamun-Nisaa', ibnul-Jawzee, p. 125.
[60] Surah At-Tur (52), ayat 27.
[61] assimtut-Tameen, Imaam al-Tabaree, p. 90.
[62] Ibid., p. 88.

standing for the prayer]." The Prophet (SAW) said, "Don't use it. Remove the rope. You should pray as long as you feel active, and when you get tired, sit down." [63]

- Ibn Abee Mulaykah said: " Whenever Asmaa' (RA) had a headache, she would put her [right] hand on her head and say: [This happened] because of my sins, and what Allah pardons is even more"[64]

Nafeesah, daughter of al-Hasan, son of Zaid, son of al-Hasan ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet (SAW) was one of the righteous pious and devoted women. She used to spend the night in prayer as well as fast during the day. She would also cry a lot for fear of Allah. When she was told to take things easy and look after herself, she said: "How can I do that while there is in front of me an ascent which only the successful [people] can cross?"

She performed Hajj thirty times. She also knew the Qur'an and its interpretation by heart. It was said that Imam ash-Shaafee (RA) learnt hadith from behind a screen and also requested her to pray for him.[65]

She died while she was fasting. When she was asked to break her fast before her death she said : "How odd! I have been praying for thirty years to meet Allah (SWT) while I am fasting. Do you want me to break my fast now? This will never happen," Then she passed away.

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[63] Sahihul-Bukhaaree, Baab at-Tahajjud 3/ 287.
[64] Al-Isaabah, al-'Asqalaanee, 2/290
[65] Mir'aatun-Nisaa', al-Adhamee, p.82.

- Maymmon ibn Mahraan said: Mu'awiyyah ibn Abu Sufyan (RA) proposed to Ummud-Dardaa', but she refused to marry him, saying: 'I heard Abu-Dardaa saying: Allah's Messenger(SAW) said: "The woman will be given [in Jannah] to the last man she married [in this life]."'[66]

- 'Ikrimah said: "Asmaa', daughter of Abu Bakr, was married to az-Zubair ibnul-'Awwaam who was hard on her. She came to her father complaining to him about her husband, and he said, " O my daughter! Be patient; for if a woman has a pious husband who dies before her and she does not marry any one after him, she will be reunited with him in Paradise." [67]

- Jubayr ibn Nufayr said that Ummud-Dardaa' said to [her husband] Abud-Dardaa': "You asked my hand in marriage from my parents in this life, and so they gave me in marriage to you, and I ask to marry you in the hereafter." He said to her: "So do not marry anyone after [my death]."

  When Mu'awiyyah proposed to her she told him about what happened between her and her husband. To this Mu'awiyyah said: "So observe fasting." [68]

- Ibn Hajar said: Ibn Sa'd reported with an authentic chain of narrators (*isnad*) that Mujaahid said: "The first martyr

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[66] This hadeeth is declared as Saheeh by al-Albaanee. See as-Saheehah, no. 1281; and also Kanzal-'Ummaal, 45558/45580; Taareekh Baghdad, 9/228 and al-Mataalib al 'Aaliyyah, 1673.

[67] See al-Albaanee's as-Saheehah, 3/276; and al-Qurtubi's at-Tadhkirah, p.576.

[68] Siyyar 'a'laamun-Nubalaa', 4/278.

in Islam was Sumayyah, the mother of 'Ammaar ibn Yaasir. She was a very old and weak woman. When Abu Jahl was killed on the day of the Battle of Badr, the Prophet (SAW) told 'Ammaar: "Allah has killed the killer of your mother."[69]

There were also many woman who suffered for Allah's sake, even more than Sumayyah did.

- Some of them would be thrown [on the ground] and then [her torturers] would bring out hot iron and place it between the folds of her skin. They would also let children play about with her eyes until she lost her eyesight. Amongst those who underwent such sufferings was Zaneerah. When her eyesight was gone, the polytheists said: " Allat and al-'Uzzah [two of the idols which the Arab polytheists used to worship] inflicted [this punishment] on her!" When she heard this she told them: "By Allah! What you said is not true. Allat and al-'Uzzaah are not even aware who they are worshipped by. Indeed, this is something which happened [by Allah's decree]. Allah is able to give me my eyesight back." When she regained her eyesight, the Quraysh said: "This is Muhammad's magic." Abu Bakr (RA) purchased her and set her free [for Allah's Sake].[70]

Some of them would be made to drink honey, chained and then thrown on the hot sands until they died from thirst.[71] Amongst these women who went through these sufferings was Umm Shareek.

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[69] Al-'Asqalaanee's al-Isaabah, 7/713.
[70] Seerat ibn Hisham, 1/126; al-Isaabah, 8/257.
[71] Al-Mar'atul-'Arabiyyah, 2/73.

- Ibn 'Abaas (RA) said: "Umm Shareek embraced Islam when she was in Makkah. She would then visit the Qurayshi women secretly and invite them to Islam. When her activities were known in Makkah, the Quraysh seized her and said to her: "Were it not of your people, we would have done such and such to you. But we [decided] to take you back to them." She said: "Then they took me with them on the back of a camel with nothing underneath me, and left me three days without food or drink. When they stopped for rest, they would let me stand in the [hot] sun while they would stay in the shade. They would also prevent me from eating and drinking until they moved off. One day, while I was in such a condition, I felt something cold fall on me. I felt it and I found that it was a bucket of water. I drank a little bit from it and then it was taken away from me. It came again, I drank a little bit more and then it was taken away from me. This happened many times until I had quenched my thirst. I then poured some of the water on my body and clothes. When they woke up and found traces of water and saw my good appearance, they said to me: "You untied yourself and drank from our waterskins." She said: "By Allah! I have not done that!" and I told them the story of what had happened. To this they said: "If what you said is true, then your religion must be better than ours." When they checked their waterskins and found them intact as they had been, they all embraced Islam on the spot.[72]

- Umm Ayman migrated [for Allah's sake] without any food or water on her. She was fasting on that day and she

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[72] Al-Isaabah, 8/248; Hilyalul-Awliyyaa', 2/66; Tabaqaat-Ibn Sa'ad, 8/110-111

nearly died from thirst. When it was iftar time, she heard something over her head. She looked up and found a bucket of water dangling. She drank from it, until she quenched her thirst. She never felt thirsty for the rest of her life."[73]

- 'Urwah ibnuz-Zubair said: "I have not seen someone with a better knowledge of fiqh [jurisprudence], medicine or poetry than 'Aisha (RA)."[74]

- Abu Musa' al-Asharee (RA) said: "Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "Many amongst men attained perfection but amongst women none attained perfection except Maryam, the daughter of 'Imraan, and 'Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh. And the superiority of 'Aishah to other women is like the superiority of Thareed [an Arabic dish] to other meals."[75]

- Abu Salamah narrated that 'Aishah (RA) said: "Once Allah's Messenger (SAW) said [to me], 'O 'Aishah! This is Gabriel greeting you' I said: 'Allah's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be on him, you see what I don't see.' she was addressing Allah's Messenger."[76]

- az-Zuhree said: "If we compare the knowledge 'Aishah has with that of all people, including the mothers of the believers [the Prophet's wives], we will find that 'Aishah (RA) is more knowledgeable." [77]

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[73] Hityatul-Awliyyaa', 2/67; Tabaqaat ibn Sa'd, 8/162.
[74] Al-Isaabah, 8/48.
[75] Al-Bukhari, 7/73; Muslim, no. 2446; at-Tirmidhee, no. 3887.
[76] Al-Bukhari, 7/83; Muslim, no. 2447.
[77] Al-Mustadrak, 4/11.

- Musa ibn Talhah said: "I have not seen anyone more fluent than 'Aishah." [78]

- 'Abdulkareem ibn Mu'aawiyyah said: "I was told that Hafsah [bint Seereen] used to recite half the Qur'an every night. She also used to fast all year round except for the two-Eid days and also the days of Tashreeq [that is, the three days following Eid-ul-Adhaa]."

- al-Haafidh adh-Dhahabee said: "We heard that [Mu'aadhah bint Abdullah] used to spend all night in prayer and say: 'I wonder how could an eye sleep when it knows of the long sleep in the darkness of the grave.'. When her husband Silah and her son were martyred in one of the battles, women came to see her and she told them: 'You are welcome if you have come to congratulate me; but if you have come for something else you had better go back.'" She also used to say: 'By Allah! I like to stay alive only to get closer to my Lord through good deeds in the hope that I get reunited with Abush-Sha'taa' and his son [her husband and son] in paradise.' [79]

- Ibnul-Haytham said: "I had a wife who used to stay up the night, and I did not have enough patience to do so. If I slept she would sprinkle water on me, wake me up with her feet, and say: 'Do you not fear Allah? Till when will you carry on snoring?' By Allah I used to be ashamed of what I had done." [80]

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[78] Al-Tirmidhee, no. 3884 who said this hadeeth is Hasan Saheeh Ghareeb.
[79] Siyyaru A'laamin-Nubalaa, 4/508-9
[80] Sifatus-Safwah, 4/391.

- Abu Khaldah said: " I have never seen a man or a woman more stronger or more patient to stand longer in nocturnal prayers [Tahajjud] than Umm Hayyaan as-Sulamiyyah. She used to pray tahajjud as though she was a palm tree stirred by the wind to the right and to the left. She also would complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an in one day and night."[81]

- Abul-Waleed al-'Abdee said: "Perhaps I saw Ghusnah and 'Aliyah, one of them would stand in the nocturnal prayers and recite al-Baqarah, 'Aal-'Imraan, an-Nisaa', al-Maa'idah, al-An'aam, and al-'A'raaf in one single rak'ah."[82]

- Abdullah ibnul-Mubaarak said[83]:
  "I [once] went out to perform Hajj in Allah's Sacred House and visit His Messenger's [masjid]. On my way I saw the dark outline of a person. I tried to see who it was and finally found that she was an old woman wearing a loose garment and a scarf. I said to her: "Assalaamu 'Alaykum [Peace be upon you]" and she said:
  "Salaamun [Peace be upon you], A word from the Lord [Allah], Most Merciful."[84]
  I then asked her: "May Allah have mercy on you! What are you doing in this place?" and she answered:
  "And whom Allah sends astray, for him, there is no guide."[85]
  Upon this I realised that she had lost her way. I asked her: "Where are you going?" she said:

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[81] Ibid. 4/38.
[82] Ibid. 4/40-1.
[83] Qasasul-'Arab: 2/190.
[84] Surah Ya-Sin (36), ayat 58.
[85] Surah Az-Zumar (39), ayat 23.

"Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allah) who took His slave (Muhammad) for a journey by night from al-Masjidul-Haram (at Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (in Jerusalem)"[86].

I then understood that she had performed Hajj and was going to the sacred house in Jerusalem. I then asked her: "How long have you been here?"

"For three nights"[87]

"I cannot see any food with you."

"It is He who feeds me and gives me to drink."[88]

"What do you make wudu with then?"

"And if you do not find water, then take for yourselves clean earth (tayammum)"[89]

"I have some food with me. Would you like to have some?"

"Then complete your fast till the nightfall."[90]

"But we are allowed not to fast while making a journey, you know."

"And that you fast is better for you if only you know."[91]

"Why do you not talk to me as I talk to you?"

"Not a word does he (or she) utter, but there is a watcher by him (or her) ready (to record it)"[92]

"Who are you then?"

"And follow not (O man, i.e. say not, or do not or witness not, etc.) that of which you have no knowledge (for example one's saying: 'I have seen' or 'I have

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[86] Surah Al-Isra' (17), ayat 1.
[87] Surah Maryam (19), ayat 10.
[88] Surah Ash-Shu'ara (26), ayat 79.
[89] Surah An-Nisa' (4), ayat 43.
[90] Surah Al-Baqarah (2), ayat 187.
[91] Surah Al-Baqarah (2), ayat 184.
[92] Surah Qaf (50), ayat 18.

heard', while he has not seen or heard). Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those of you will be questioned (by Allah)."[93]

"I am sorry. I have made a mistake."

"No reproach on you this day, may Allah forgive you"[94]

"Would you like to mount my camel so that you can catch up with the caravan?"

"And whatever good you do, (be sure) Allah knows it."[95]

When I made the camel kneel down, she said:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things)."[96]

I lowered my gaze and when she was about to mount the camel, this latter got startled and as a result of this, tore her clothes, She said:

"And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned."[97]

I then told her to mount it and she said:

"Glory to Him who has subjected this to us, and we could never have it (by our efforts). And verily, To our Lord we indeed are to return."[98]

She took hold of the rein while I walked along, shouting out. She said at this:

"And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice."[99]

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[93] Surah Al-Isra (17), ayat 36.
[94] Surah Yusuf (12), ayat 92.
[95] Surah Al-Baqarah (2), ayat 270.
[96] Surah An-Nur (24), ayat 30.
[97] Surah Ash-Shura (42), ayat 30.
[98] Surah Az-Zukhruf (43), ayats 13-14.
[99] Surah Luqman (31), ayat 19.

I then started walking slowly and reciting some poetry. But she said:

"So recite as much of the Qur'aan as may be easy for you."[100]

I said to her: "You have truly recieved abundant good." She said in reply to this:

"But none remember except men of understanding."[101] (al-Baqarah)

After a short while I asked her: "Are you married?"

"O you who believe! Ask not about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble."[102] came the reply. I then kept silent until we caught up with the caravan. I asked her: "Who do you have in this caravan?" She said:

"Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world."[103]

This answer gave me the idea that she had children. So I asked her: "And what do they do in Hajj?" She said:

"And land-marks (sign-posts etc.) during the day and by the stars (during the night), they (mankind) guide themselves."[104]

I understood by this that they work as caravan guides.

When we reached the buildings I asked her: "Who do you know living here?" She said: **"And Allah did take Ibraheem as an intimate friend"[105]**

"And to Musaa, Allah spoke directly."[106]

"O Yahyaa! Hold fast to the Scripture."[107]

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[100] Surah Al-Muzzammil (73), ayat 20.

[101] Surah Al-Baqarah (2), ayat 269.

[102] Surah Al-Ma'idah (5), ayat 101.

[103] Surah Al-Kahf (18), ayat 46.

[104] Surah An-Nahl (16), ayat 16.

[105] Surah An-Nisa' (4), ayat 125.

[106] Surah An-Nisa' (4), ayat 164.

I then called out: "O Ibraaheem! O Musaa! O Yahyaa!" and three young men with shining faces came forward. When they sat down she said to them:

"Send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the town, and let him find out which is the good lawful food, and bring some of that to you."[108]

One of them left and returned soon afterwards with some food which he placed in frount of me. She said:

"Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past!"[109]

I addressed her sons, saying: "I won't touch your food until you tell me of your mother's story." They said: "Our mother has taken upon herself the task of speaking nothing but verses of the Qur'aan lest she should commit a sin which could lead to Allah's wrath upon her. And she has been in this habit for forty years now." I said:

"That is the Grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He will. And Allah is the Owner of Mighty Grace."[110]

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[107] Surah Maryam (19), ayat 12.
[108] Surah Al-Kahf (18), ayat 19.
[109] Surah Al-Haqqah (69), ayat 24.
[110] Surah Al-Jumu'ah (62), ayat 4.

A good parent looks after his son

- Genius boy memorises the whole Qur'an as well as 6000 hadith.

Cairo -

Alexandria witnessed last week the honoring of an Egyptian boy who surpassed his contemporaries and memorised the whole Qur'aan and 6000 authentic (saheeh) hadith. This record performance put him on the same level with the foremost children in the world in this field.

The name of this wonderful boy is Abdullah Muhammad Jabr. He committed the whole Qur'aan to memory at the age of seven, and when he turned nine the number of authentic hadith he had memorised rose to 6000. The Ministry of Religious Endowments selected him for the first cash prize of 5000 Egyptian pounds which the Egyptian president increased to 20000.

Abdullah has one brother who attends the Azhar University and two sisters, one married and one who is six years old. His father Muhammad Jabr is known for his piety and good character and works as a petroleum engineer in a company in al-Mansurah province where this wonderful boy was born.

Abdullah's father says that the Book of Allah has been the way of life and source of education for himself, his wife and

his four children. He encouraged all his children to memorise the book of Allah. He realised Abdullah's great memory when his son used to watch television commercials and learn them by heart. He embarked on guiding his son to take full advantage of this faculty in order to benefit him. both in this life and the hereafter.

So he began teaching him the short surahs of the holy Qur'an. As he received a good response from him, he would then explain to him the meaning of the verses to make memorisation easier. The boy started memorising the Qur'an when he was two and a half years old and completed it by the time he turned seven.

Then came the second phase, namely the memorisation of the prophetic traditions (hadith): His father made an intensive programme for him whereby he would memorise 100 hadith a day during the summer holidays and 50 hadith a day during the school period.

When Abdullah was asked about his ambitions he said: "I would like to become one of those Muslim scholars who study the Qur'aan and the Islamic sciences with a view to teaching them to the people, acting on the teaching contained in the hadith in which the prophet (SAW) said: "The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and then teach it to others." I would like to become a Muslim daa'iah (caller to Islam), travelling all over the country and teaching people their religion. I hope I will have my ambitions fulfilled now that I attend religious studies in the mosques.".

Abdullah's father, tells us of how it all began. He said that everything started with Surah al-Inshiraah (comfort) when he used to learn it by heart with his mother's aid. When his

father knew that he had memorised the whole surah, he got rid of the television set, thus paving the way for a journey with the Qur'aan which will not stop till the end of his life *.

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* Ashark Al awsat newspaper 5/6/1996